Articles of dress, domestic utensils, arms and other curiosities: Excavating early nineteenth century collections from southern African at the London Missionary Society museum

Abstract:

The stimulus for this paper arises from a comparison between missionary collecting in two of the earliest mission fields established by the London Missionary Society: the Pacific (1797), and Southern Africa (1799). As the location to which a large number of Polynesian 'idols' were sent following conversion to Christianity, the LMS museum (1814 -1910) has gained an important place in Pacific historiography, but the same cannot be said for southern Africa. This paper explores the significance of the LMS museum as a site of deposition for material that originated in missionary encounters and exchanges in southern Africa during the first third of the nineteenth century, and its potential to provide a source of material evidence that complements the texts associated with the documentary archive, but also the material remains associated with the former mission site, the usual focus for historical and archaeological engagements. Particular attention is given to material associated with John Campbell (1766-1840) and Robert Moffat (1795-1883), who travelled extensively in the region and subsequently published accounts of their journeys. Re-situating particular museum artefacts within the specific circumstances of these missionary encounters enables them to stand, not as exemplars of African cultural practices prior to European contact, but rather as forms of evidence that chart historical transformations in material culture across the southern African contact zone.

Introduction

On 23 September 1816, Robert Moffat visited the museum at the headquarters of the London Missionary Society (LMS), an experience he described in a letter to his parents as 'truly awful'.[1] He noted that 'the appearance of the wild beasts is very terrific' but suggested that 'I am unable to describe the sensations in my mind when gazing on objects of pagan worship', an experience which strengthened his resolve to become a missionary. A week later, on 30 September 1816, he formally committed himself to missionary work during a service at Surrey Chapel in London, at the same time as another aspiring young missionary, John Williams.[2] Williams subsequently departed for the Pacific and Moffat travelled to the Cape. Although they worked on opposite sides of the southern hemisphere for most of the next two decades, the men's lives remained connected through participation in the LMS, a global network of circulation in which they both played important roles.[3]

As the location to which a large number of Polynesian 'idols' were sent following conversions to Christianity, the LMS museum has gained an important place in Pacific historiography.[4] The collecting activities of LMS missionaries in the Pacific, and of John Williams in particular, have been the focus for a growing

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[1] J.S. Moffat, *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1885), p. 26.
[2] E. Prout, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. John Williams, Missionary to Polynesia* (London, John Snow, 1843), pp.23-24.
[3] Underlying research was undertaken as doctoral research at the University of Birmingham, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (Award no. 126750). The resulting thesis is: C. Wingfield, 'The Moving Objects of the London Missionary Society: An Experiment in Symmetrical Anthropology' (University of Birmingham, 2012). Additonal research leading to the production of this text was undertaken during an Early Career Fellowship at CRASSH, the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, at the University of Cambridge.
[4] eg. N. Thomas, *Entangled Objects : Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London, Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 151-162.

body of research and publications.[5] The same cannot be said for LMS agents in southern Africa, such as Robert Moffat.[6] Indeed, neither the Comaroff's two volumes *Of Revelation and Revolution,* nor Elizabeth Elbourne's *Blood Ground,* significant works exploring missionary encounters in southern Africa, acknowledge the museum that was maintained at the Mission House in London from 1814 until 1910.[7] Nevertheless, it seems that Moffat, like Williams, regarded collecting material as part of his role as a missionary for the LMS.[8]

Here, I intend to explore the significance of the LMS museum as a site of deposition for material that originated in missionary encounters and exchanges in southern Africa during the first third of the nineteenth century, and its potential to provide a source of material evidence that complements the texts

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[5] S. Hooper, *Pacific Encounters : Art & Divinity in Polynesia 1760-1860* (London, British Museum Press, 2006); S. Hooper, 'La Collecte Comme Iconoclasme', *Gradhiva*, 7 (2008), pp. 120-133; R. Neich, 'Tongan Figures: From Goddesses to Missionary Trophies to Masterpieces', *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 116, 2 (2007), pp. 213-268; D.S. King, *Food for the flames : idols and missionaries in central Polynesia* (San Francisco ; London, Beak Press in association with Holberton Publishing, 2011).

[6] Annie Coombes devoted a chapter to missionary museums and displays in her book *Reinventing Africa*, but this is focused on modes of display in Britain rather than the contents of the relevant collections. See: ''For God and For England': Missionary Contributions to an Image of Africa' in A.E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination* (New Haven ; Yale University Press, 1994).

[7] J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago ; London, University of Chicago Press, 1991); J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago ; London, University of Chicago Press, 1997); E. Elbourne, *Blood Ground : Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* (Montreal ; McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).
Elbourne does suggest that 'The information networks associated with missions thus facilitated a politics of display" (p.14) but does not directly relate this to the LMS museum.

[8] In his account of the history of the South African Museum in Cape Town, John Mackenzie notes a letter sent by Andrew Smith its first curator to Moffat in January 1826 asking him to collect specimens for the museum: J.M. MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire : Natural History, Human Cultures and Colonial Identities* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009), p.81; P.R. Kirby, *Sir Andrew Smith M.D., K.C.B. his life, letters, and works 1797-1850* (Cape Town, A.A. Balkema 1965), p. 56.

associated with the documentary archive, but also the material remains associated with former mission sites, the usual foci for historical and archaeological engagements. As with any site of deposition or assemblage, however, making sense of the evidence preserved within a museum collection involves a careful process of engagement and excavation, in order to develop a detailed understanding of its underlying taphonomic and formation processes, including those that occurred after deposition.[9] Identifying evidence of early nineteenth century encounters surviving in museums today therefore also involves developing an understanding of the subsequent events in which objects became involved following their arrival in Britain.[10]

Illustrating Missionary Accounts

John Williams returned to England in June 1834 and embarked on a fundraising campaign that lasted several years and culminated in the publication of his *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises* in 1837.[11] Ebenezer Prout, who assisted Williams with the preparation of his text, remembered him bringing out cases of 'curiosities which he had brought from the islands' and speaking at length about a 'singular medley of idols, dresses, ornaments, domestic utensils, implements of

[9] Ann Laura Stoler has described a similar form of engagement in relation to documentary archives as 'a commitment to a less assured and perhaps more humble stance – to explore the grain with care and read along it first': A.L. Stoler *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009), p.50.

[10] For a methodological discussion of the process of reassembling the London Missionary Society collection, see C. Wingfield, 'Reassembling the London Missionary Society collection: experiments with symmetrical anthropology and the archaeological sensibility', in S. Byrne, A. Clarke and R. Harrison (eds), *Reassembling the Collection* (Santa Fe, SAR Seminar Series, 2012), pp. 61-87.

[11] J. Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands; : with remarks upon the natural history of the islands, origin, languages, traditions, and usages of the inhabitants* (London, Published for the author by J. Snow, 1837).

industry and weapons of war'. [12] Williams' book featured images of Pacific artefacts alongside the text, produced as woodcut illustrations by George Baxter. Early editions also included a colour image of *Te Po*, a tattooed chief from Rarotonga, also by Baxter, inserted opposite a woodcut frontispiece image showing the formal presentation of abandoned staff gods to Williams in Rarotonga.[13] Williams' book, while building on precedents such as William Ellis' *Polynesian Researches,* published in 1829, nevertheless initiated a new era for missionary publications due to the widespread popularity it achieved.[14] Williams' fundraising activities in England ultimately funded the purchase of a new missionary ship, the Camden, in which he returned to the Pacific in April 1838.

In June 1839, Robert Moffat arrived in England to supervise the printing of his translation of the New Testament into Setswana. In November of that year, however, Williams was killed on the island of Erromanga, in what is now Vanuatu. Such was the impact in England of this high profile missionary martyrdom that Moffat was pressed into a series of promotional speaking tours across the British isles on behalf of the LMS. This kept him away from Kuruman, the mission station where he was based in South Africa, for nearly five years, but also led to the publication of his own book, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in*

[12] E. Prout, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. John Williams, Missionary to Polynesia* (London, John Snow, 1843), pp.479-480.
[13] Baxter was an artist and printer, credited with the invention of commercially viable colour printing. His services were widely sought, including to record the coronation of Queen Victoria.
[14] W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches, during a residence of nearly six years in the South Sea Islands: including descriptions of the natural history and scenery of the islands, with remarks on the history, mythology, traditions, government, arts, manners, and customs of the inhabitants* (London, Fisher, Son, & Jackson, 1829).

Southern Africa in 1842. In many ways this followed a template established by Williams' *Narrative*, including the production of illustrations by George Baxter: a colour image of Moffat in a well-tended landscape at Kuruman was inserted opposite a woodcut frontispiece showing him preaching from an ox wagon. In addition, the book included a number of illustrations of southern African artefacts, including a 'Bechuana milk-sack or l*ekuka'*, 'the head of a spear', 'Bechuana wooden spoons' and a 'Bechuana war-axe, knife and needle' (see Figure 1).[15]

In a volume published to record 'farewell services' commemorating Moffat's return to southern Africa in 1843, an anonymous short description of the LMS museum described it as 'an awful yet glorious place!'[16] The emphasis of the account was placed squarely on the 'numerous idols and articles of heathenism', including a large staff god, brought from Rarotonga by John Williams, but also an arrow fired at the crew of the missionary ship during the incident in which he was killed. 'Idols' from China and India were described, alongside the costumes of 'Devil Dancers' from Sri Lanka. A rather shorter paragraph described 'articles of dress, domestic utensils, arms and other curiosities from Africa and Madagascar'. Particular items noted included the 'neck, arm, and leg rings, used by Mantatee females', presented by Mr Moffat, a Bechuana spear and battle-axe, as well as a medicinal stick, 'given by the queen of Lattakoo to the late John Campbell'. The museum also included numerous natural history specimens, and

[15] R. Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London, J. Snow, 1842), list of engravings.
[16] J. Campbell, *The Farewell Services of Robert Moffat, in Edinburgh, Manchester, and London* (London, John Snow, 1843), p.134-7.

the description refers to 'two large crocodiles… killed in the Lempopo river… and presented by Mr Moffat' as well as the large giraffe, shot by Campbell's party in 1814, standing at the centre of the museum alongside the Rarotongan 'staff god'.[17] Unlike John Williams, Moffat did not return to London bearing abandoned 'gods' or 'idols', since objects of this kind were not associated with the ceremonial and religious practices he encountered in southern Africa. Nevertheless does appear to have been a fairly active collector, and Campbell records Moffat acquiring a wooden milk vessel from a Korana 'captain', in exchange for a tinder box, as early as March 1820.[18]

Locating Southern Africa at the London Missionary Society Museum

It is significant that John Campbell is the other missionary traveller mentioned in this account. Campbell first went to southern Africa to inspect its mission stations in June 1812, travelling beyond the frontier of the Cape Colony as far as Dithakong, around 1000km northeast of Cape Town.[19] He arrived back in England in May 1814, just under two years later, and immediately began promoting the work of the LMS through public talks. He went on to publish an account of his *Travels in South Africa* in early 1815. Given that Campbell appears to have returned with the skins of several large mammals, including that of a giraffe, it is presumably no coincidence that in August 1814, the Directors of the London Missionary Society took some rooms 'in which the curiosities sent by our

[17] See: C. Wingfield, 'Giraffe, South Africa', in K. Jacobs, C. Knowles and C. Wingfield (eds), *Trophies, Relics and Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific* (Leiden, Sidestone Press. , 2015), pp. 24-27.
[18] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume 1, p.47.
[19] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa: Undertaken at the request of the Missionary Society* (London, Black and Parry, 1815), p.vi.

missionaries may be deposited'.[20] A note published in the Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle for October 1814 announced the preparation of a museum, featuring 'curiosities… transmitted from Otaheite, China, South America and particularly from South Africa.'[21] It seems clear that the establishment of a museum at the headquarters of the London Missionary Society was in large part connected to the collecting activities of John Campbell during his first journey in South Africa.

In November 1818, Campbell set off for a second journey to South Africa.[22] Two months previously, however, 'The Family Idols of Pomare' had arrived in London, sent to the Directors of the LMS by the 'King of Otaheite' to demonstrate the sincerity of hos conversion to Christianity. The 'idols' generated an extraordinary level of public interest in the work of the missionary society, but also in the LMS museum, arguably initiating a shift in its focus away from 'items of general curiosity' towards 'items of religion and superstition'. [23] Pomare's 'idols' were interpreted an indicator of missionary success and as a genuine breakthrough, aligned with biblical narratives of conversion, as well as iconoclastic practices associated with the history of European Protestantism.[24] There was very little that Campbell could have collected in southern Africa on his

[20] R. Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895* (London, Oxford University Press, 1899), volume 1, p.91.
[21] 'Missionary Rooms', *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, (October 1814), p.405.
[22] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume 1, p.1.
[23] See Wingfield, Chris. 2017. ''Scarcely more than a Christian trophy case'? The global collections of the London Missionary Society museum (1814-1910)', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 19(1):109-128: https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhw002.
[24] 'Otaheite', *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, September 1818, p.401.

second journey that would have lent itself easily to a similar narrative framing. When he returned in May 1821, he brought with him a range of 'natural curiosities' including a wildebeest and the skull of an extremely long horned rhino. While the horn generated a degree of interest, due to speculation that the 'unicorn' referred to in the Book of Job might in fact have been a rhinoceros, it nevertheless seems that the limelight at the LMS museum was increasingly taken by its growing collection of 'idols', many sent by John Williams from the Pacific.

The object in the LMS museum from southern Africa which came closest to this definition was a preserved praying mantis, described in LMS publications as 'the Hottentot's God', presumably a translation of the Afrikaans term 'Hottentotsgot'.[25] The earliest surviving catalogue of the LMS museum, dating from 1826, noted 'the general veneration in which it is held among uncivilized or superstitious people', a category that included 'the common people of Languedoc (a province of France)'. [26] The catalogue also quotes Vanderkemp, an early LMS missionary at Bethelsdorp in the Eastern Cape to the effect that 'The Hottentots consider it almost a deity, and offer their prayers to it, begging that it may not destroy them'. This is juxtaposed with an account by Kicherer, his contemporary at Zak River in the Northern Cape, who suggested that 'they have no idea whatever of the Supreme Being, consequently practice no kind of worship; they have, however, a superstitious reverence for a little insect… a sight of which, they conceive, indicates something fortunate, and to kill it, they suppose, will bring a

[25] 'The Mantis or Hottentot's God', *The Evangelical magazine and missionary chronicle*, 26, August (1818), pp. 346-347.
[26] *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars* (London, London Missionary Society, 1826), p.41.

curse upon the perpetrator.' It was clearly far easier to dismiss southern African beliefs and practices relating to non-human species as baseless superstitions, shared with 'common people' in Europe, than it was consider them as acts of worship equivalent either to Christian practice, or the 'idolatrous' practices encountered in India, China and the Pacific.[27]

It is significant that in the same 1826 catalogue, specimens of 'Natural History' are listed before the 'various idols of heathen nations' or the 'Dresses, Manufactures, domestic utensils, Instruments of war &c. &c. &c.'. If the contents of the catalogue are analysed according to these three main declared categories, then of approximately 550 items, 58% can be categorized as Manufactures, Domestic Utensils (184), Dresses (81), Instruments of War (32), and Publications (26). Just over 21% can be categorised as Natural History (117) and 20% as Idols (110). Broken down geographically, African material represents the largest group (30% - 163 items), followed by the Pacific (25% - 135 items), China (16% - 87 items), India (11% - 58 items), with Madagascar, the Americas and Southeast Asia all around 3% (under 20 items), and the remainder unprovenanced. What is most significant, however, is that African material makes up around 45% of the Natural History specimens but none of the 'idols'.

Of the remaining artefactual material (323 items), Africa contributes over a third (111 items) and the Pacific contributes over a quarter (89 items). It is this

[27] Studies of /Xam folktales recorded in the Cape by Bleek and Lloyd suggest that /Kaggen was a shape-shifting trickster god who frequently took the form of a praying mantis. See: A. Barnard, *Hunters and herders of southern Africa : a comparative ethnography of the Khoisan peoples* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.84.

artefactual material, rather than natural history specimens, that is of particular interest here. Brought to London and deposited in the LMS museum before 1826, this material forms a significant material record of missionary encounters and exchanges in southern Africa during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. While catalogue records for several items of Natural History explicitly connect them with John Campbell, this is not the case for the artefactual material. Nevertheless, catalogue entries refer to several places that link items to the itineraries of Campbell's journeys:

Genadendal: Knives 'made by the Hottentots at the Moravian Settlement'

Pacaltsdorp: A pair of stockings made 'at the Hottentot Knitting School'

Bethelsdorp: Specimens of 'excellently made' baskets, a pipe, as well as a pair of stockings and a night cap, all described as 'made by Hottentots at Bethelsdorp'

Lattakoo [Dithakong]: A pair of dice made of the hoof of an antelope, a man's copper ear-ring weighing two and a half ounces, a leather snuff box, a medicinal stick, a model house, as well as an elephant's tusk presented to Campbell by the 'King of Lattakoo'

Mashow [Khunwana]: A razor and a war axe with the handle made of the horn of a Rhinoceros

Kurreechane [Kaditshwene]: Specimens of pottery for holding milk, four knives, iron beads and a 'marrootzee' [Bahurutshe] axe, adze and pick axe[28]

[28] See J.C.A. Boeyens, 'In Search of Kaditshwene', *The South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 55 (2000), pp. 3-17.

In addition, a number of items are referred to in ethnic terms, without naming a location:

Hottentot [Khoekhoe]: Ostrich egg rudely carved and coloured by a Hottentot, a head dress made of Porcupine's bristles, two head dresses decorated with shells, wooden spoons carved with different patterns, two pipes (one wooden), a paint box made of a small tortoise, snuff box made of a sea bean, aprons and African belts made of beads

Corannas: [Korana]: A shaving brush 'made of wood, by beating it when green' and an African milk-pail

Namacqua: A Pipe

Bootchuana [Batswana, here probably Batlhaping]: An apron made of reeds and peas, worn by females in one of their religious ceremonies

Morolong [Barolong]: Needles used by Bootchuanas and Morolongs

Mantatese [Mantatees]: Four neck rings worn by one female, a chief's wife, and taken on the occasion of the battle of Dithakong, along with copper ornaments, a copper ring, a needle, a knife, and an apron

This last set of items, relating to the Mantatees, are particularly significant since the battle in question occurred in June 1823, after Campbell was back in England. This suggests that they were forwarded to London by Robert Moffat possibly along with his account of the event which was published in the Missionary Chronicle in January 1824.[29] Moffat travelled to Cape Town in late 1823 with five women and a boy who had formed part of the Mantatee group, defeated by a

[29] 'South Africa', *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, January 1824, p.32.

combination of Griqua and Batlhaping forces at Dithakong earlier that year, and it may be that these items were forwarded to London then.[30]

Other southern Africa items listed in 1826 without any specific provenance include several axes, quivers of poisoned arrows, two whips, a club, several calabashes, several pipes, rings of ivory and copper, shell beads, several necklaces, a rattle, a solid wood milk pail, a leather bottle, and a number of hats and baskets from the interior of Africa. The descriptions for some of these appear to correspond to an image produced in Campbell's account of his first voyage, published in 1815, when they were broadly described as 'Bootchuana Ornaments and Utensils' although the bow, arrows and quiver are described as 'Bushman's' (see Figure 2).

It should be clear from the above descriptions that the museum contained a mixture of material, from natural history specimens and items of ethnographic curiosity, to examples of work that demonstrated the industry and achievement at recently established missionary settlements, particularly those established for 'Hottentots' within the Cape Colony. Elizabeth Elbourne has suggested that 'dramas of civilization and savagery were acted out to a variety of political ends' through missionary information networks, and arguably the museum at the LMS headquarters was situated at the centre of these networks.[31] After describing the

[30] 'The "Mantatees"', in *The South African Commercial Advertiser* (Cape Town, Wednesday 7 January 1824), p. 5.
[31] E. Elbourne, *Blood Ground : Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p.14.

natural history specimens as of particular interest to children, the introductory text of the museum's 1826 catalogue suggests that:

> The efforts of natural genius, especially in countries rude and uncivilized, afford another class of interesting curiosities; whilst they prove how capable even the most uncivilized of mankind are of receiving that instruction which it is the study of the Missionaries to communicate.

That 'efforts of natural genius' were intended to demonstrate potential and capacity, especially among the 'uncivilized', presumably explains why there was considerably more material of this kind from Africa and the Pacific, than from other mission fields such as India and China, whose relative civilization was at times regarded as a potential obstacle to missionary success.

Re-shaping the LMS Museum

In 1835, the LMS museum moved to a purpose built Mission House at Blomfield Street. Nevertheless, by 1839 it was said to be in a 'miserable state… not only of utter confusion and Chaos, but in a state of ruin and decay', suffering from the impact of mould, moths and spiders.[32] However, it does seem that a series of labels were attached to the items at around this time.[33] Several images of the museum survive from between 1843 and 1853, and these show a relatively consistent view, dominated by Campbell's giraffe and Williams' Rarotongan staff

[32] School of Oriental and Africa Studies Archives & Special Collections (hereafter SOAS): CWM/LMS/Home/Incoming correspondence, Box 7, Folder 5 - Henry Syer Cuming to Bennet Esq, 29 April 1839.
[33] 'The London Missionary Museum', London Saturday Journal (London, William Smith, 1840), 25 January, pp. 60-61.

god (see Figure 3). In addition, the model house from Dithakong, Campbell's rhino horn, and at least one of Moffat's crocodiles can be identified in images from 1843 and 1847.[34] However, by 1853 several natural history specimens appear to have been removed from display, including the crocodiles, possibly because they had begun to decay. A more comprehensive rearrangement was carried out in 1859 by one of John Williams's sons, when most of the Natural History specimens were removed from the main display area (see Figure 4).[35] A further surviving catalogue of the museum appears to match the layout of this rearrangement, and therefore dates from between 1859 and 1862.[36]

The catalogue reflects a reordering in the priorities of the museum, with Pacific 'idols' listed first and Natural History relegated to the very end of the catalogue. However, an analysis of the catalogue entries also reveals the way in which the concentration of the collection had shifted in the interim. Compared to 1826, a third of a century earlier, the number of 'idols' listed had more than tripled (from 110 to 344), largely through significant increases in examples from India, China, and to a lesser extent the Pacific. Specimens of natural history had only doubled (from 117 to 266), but were still dominated by African examples. With idols excluded, catalogue entries for the remaining artefactual collections had tripled (from 323 to 1096), but of these the African examples had increased by a smaller

[34] For a discussion of the model house, see: C.E. Weinberg, 'Moffat's Model House, South Africa', in K. Jacobs, C. Knowles and C. Wingfield (eds), *Trophies, Relics and Curios? Missionary Heritage from Africa and the Pacific* (Leiden, Sidestone Press. , 2015), pp. 146-150.
[35] One of the crocodiles does appear under the cases on the left of this image.
[36] *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Blomfield Street, Finsbury* (London, Reed and Pardon, Printers). Preserved at the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Hawaii (Fuller AM Museum Pam. 619). The printers of the catalogue 'Reed & Pardon' ceased to operate under this name in 1862: E.C. Bigmore, *A Bibliography of Printing with Notes and Illustrations* (London, Bernard Quaritch, 1884), p.117.

multiple (from 111 items to 260). By 1860 African material made up only 18% of the museum's total artefactual collection (including idols), having been overtaken by the Pacific with approximately 30% (420 items). The reduced significance of African material at the museum is also reflected in the ordering of the catalogue, since it was only listed on p.33, after material from the Pacific, China and India, and just before a small selection of material from the Americas, miscellaneous articles and Natural History.

Comparing the southern African entries to those from the 1826 catalogue, it becomes immediately possible to recognize many of the items that were described over three decades earlier. Interestingly, however, some are provided with additional information, not given in the 1826 catalogue entries. While the later catalogue continues to link Campbell to the same Natural History specimens (apart from the elephant tusk presented by the 'King of Lattakoo' which no longer appears), it also lists Campbell's name in association with four artefactual items, which was not the case in 1826. It is possible that Campbell or his family would have donated additional items in the meantime (he died in 1840), but each description appears to match one that appeared in the earlier catalogue. It is possible that labels including this information were attached to these objects, or that subsequent research using Campbell's published accounts made these connections.

Indeed, in some cases, a description in Campbell's account of his second journey recounts the circumstances in which he received the items. A medicinal stick from the Queen of Lattakoo [Dithakong] appears in 1826, but the later catalogue

specified that it was given to Campbell. Similarly, 'rings or ivory, copper, &c. for Ornaments, worn on the legs and arms' are mentioned in 1826, but the later catalogue refers to four 'armlets of ivory taken from her own arm by Queen of Lattakoo and presented to Mr. Campbell'. In the account of his second journey Campbell describes 'Mahootoo' taking an ivory ring off her arm and giving it to him. He then writes:

> She had a small piece of stick suspended on the left side of her cloak, about nine or ten inches long, with the bark on it, and full of notches cut with a knife. She said it was made by a doctor, and she wore it to cure a head-ache. She would not part with that, but brought me one in the afternoon exactly like it, and informed me that it cured either by hanging to the dress, or if I put the point of it into the fire and drew up the smoke into my nostrils it would remove the pain.[37]

A razor from Mashow [Khunwana] is listed in the 1826 catalogue, but the later catalogue states that it was presented by Mr Campbell. In his account Campbell describes witnessing 'a woman shaving the head of another with a razor shaped like a round spade… The razor was purchased for a few beads; the bargain being finished they seemed highly diverted at the occurrence'. An image of the razor was also reproduced in Campbell's published account with the caption 'A Mashow Razor made of Steel'.[38]

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[37] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume two, p.165.
[38] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume one, p.184-5, image opposite p.277.

Other items in the collection can be fairly straightforwardly linked to Campbell's published accounts, but these connections are not made in the catalogue. In addition, the catalogue describes an 'armlet of brass beads worn by young king of Kureechane' [Kaditshwene], presented by Mr Campbell. While Campbell's account describes receiving beads from the rain-maker's wife at Kaditshwene, and at least one 'large elephant's tooth' from the Regent, it does not appear to describe this armlet. It does describe a decorated clay pot received from Moeelway [Moilwe] the young King's brother, who is described in an image caption as the 'young King of the Marootzee' [Bahurutshe].[39] It is possible that Moffat provided some of the additional information, since he accompanied Campbell on much of his second journey in 1819 and 1820, although he did not travel from Dithakong to Kaditshwene.[40]

The later catalogue also lists a number of items presented to the museum by Moffat. Apart from Campbell and Moffat, the only other individual associated with material from southern Africa in the later catalogue is the Rev. J.J. Freeman, a missionary in Madagascar from 1827 to 1835, who was later Secretary of the LMS and presented a 'hat from the interior of South Africa' and a model of an African wagon and plough, made by a native artisan. Items from the 'Mantatese' are recorded in the later catalogue as presented by Moffat. Having been simply listed in the 1826 catalogue, the Bechuana model house from Dithakong is described in the later catalogue as having been 'made on the spot by Rev. R.

[39] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume one, p.228, p. 233 & p.238, image opposite p.260).
[40] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume one, p.2, p.5, p.117.

Moffat'. In addition, a number of additional items, not listed in the earlier catalogue, are explicitly linked to Moffat:

- Two *Matlatla*. Bechuana earplates of copper, worn only by persons of distinction.
- Small round *Matlatla* and various arm and leg ornaments of brass wire, beads, leather etc.
- Specimens of Bechuana copper, in the process of wire-drawing, as performed in the presence of the Rev. Mr. Moffat.[41]
- Two ornaments of black ostrich feathers, worn by the Bechuana tribe.
- A string of prognosticating dice of a Basuto, composed of small hoofs and astragali.
- A large wooden ladle for distributing boiled corn, used by the Bechuana and Amazoola tribes.
- A large milk pail, or bottle, carved outside; used by the Amazoola tribe.
- A spoon with grooved handle.
- Two snuff boxes, or bottles, of carved ivory.
- A knife, which has the haft and sheath covered with brass wire.
- Seven wooden spoons, the handles ornamented with carvings of the giraffe, elephant, buffalo, bird, human head, etc.
- Hat in the European shape, made of giraffe hair; it is of great rarity, and highly valued at the Cape.
- Stuffed skins of two large crocodiles, from the Limpopo river, in the interior of South Africa.

[41] In his description of this incident, Moffat refers his readers to examples in the LMS Museum: R. Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London, J. Snow, 1842).

- Tsipho, or Jerboa of Scripture, which destroyed the corn of the Philistines when the ark was taken.

The later catalogue also suggests further influence by Moffat, or at least another missionary familiar with Setswana, since many of the items listed as 'Bechuana' are given local names. In addition to *Matlatla* given above, Setswana terms are also given for the following items, not recorded as presented by Moffat, some of which also appear in the 1826 catalogue:

- *Litlaka* - sandles
- *Makantsa* - Bechuana sash, suspended on the hip in their dances
- *Manyena* – ear drops of brass wire
- *Mihitsana* - finger-rings, of brass wire
- *Litola* - sticks, for producing fire by friction
- *Limao* - needles and cases, used by the Bechuanas, Barolongs, and Mantatees

In addition, large angular plates of copper, worn across the breast by Mantatee warriors are described as *Likhau*. There is also a range of material associated with ethnic groups beyond those referred to in the 1826 catalogue, 'Amazoola', 'Amakosa', 'Amaponda', and 'Fingo', some explicitly connected to Moffat, as noted above. It seems likely that both Campbell and Moffat were associated with many more items than those that include their names in the catalogue descriptions. Nevertheless, the recording of their names in the catalogue around 1860 is significant since it charts an incipient shift at the LMS museum, as items came to be regarded as important precisely because they were associated with famous

heroic male missionaries, rather than because they provided evidence of 'civilization' or 'savagery' among converts or potential converts.[42]

While there is a great deal to be learned from the detailed analysis of these catalogues, and the ways in which they chart shifting understandings of, and engagements with southern African artefacts across the nineteenth century, they also provide an important way of identifying material from the collection that survives today. The later published catalogue was associated with a colour coded labeling system, with numbered labels for material from Africa and Madagascar printed on red paper. By comparing surviving red numbered labels with this catalogue, it is clear that they correspond with the descriptions given. However, the survival of items from the LMS museum is by no means complete, and it is necessary to account for further transformations at the LMS museum that followed the 1859 reorganisation, in order to understand these additional taphonomic processes.

The LMS Museum during its second half-century

In 1867, the LMS sent 619 objects from the LMS museum to be exhibited as part of a Pavilion of Protestant Evangelical Missions at the Universal Exposition in Paris.[43] In 1878, the museum was relocated from its location in 'the midst of the back land' at the Mission House in Blomfield Street, to a newly built upper floor

[42] Wingfield, Chris. 2017. ''Scarcely more than a Christian trophy case'? The global collections of the London Missionary Society museum (1814-1910)', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 19(1):109-128: https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhw002.
[43] T. Vernes, *Exposition Universelle de 1867 à Paris: Section des Missions Protestantes Évangéliques: catalogue et notices* (Paris, E. Denti, 1867).

in the main building, where it was 'carefully arranged in the new cases provided for it'.[44] At this time there seems to have been an increasing recognition that the museum contained an essentially historic collection 'accumulated during a long course of years by the agents of the Society in all lands'. However, temporary exhibitions, organized by local supporters of the LMS in town and village halls, were becoming an increasingly popular form of missionary propaganda at this time and in 1885 certain objects from the museum were 'set apart as a loan collection'.[45]

New evolutionary scientific paradigms also meant that ethnographic material generated new interest among those employed in civic museums, and the early nineteenth century material at the LMS museum came to be regarded enviously from Bloomsbury, since it appeared to index cultural forms that predated European influence.[46] In 1890, the Directors of the LMS agreed to 'lend under certain conditions objects of interest from the Society's Museum for exhibition at the British Museum', with the idea that they should be labeled as lent by the London Missionary Society and placed together in a separate case.[47] Of 241 items recorded as part of this loan, 234 came from the Pacific, and of the remaining seven only two came from southern Africa: Moffat's model house from Dithakong and an unusual ostrich eggshell belt.[48] In the same year, the Foreign Secretary of

[44] 'The London Mission House', *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, (January 1878), p.10.
[45] SOAS: CWM/LMS/Home/Literature Committee Minute Book, Minute 99, February 27 1885 - Loan Museum
[46] C. Wingfield, 'Placing Britain in the British Museum: Encompassing the Other', in P. Aronsson, A. B. Amundsen and S. Knell (eds), *National Museums* (London, Routledge, 2011), pp. 123-137.
[47] SOAS: CWM/LMS. Home Board Minutes. FBN 7 (1877- 1890) Box 44 p.450, Wednesday 19th March 1890
[48] BM: Af;LMS.2 (Beads) & Af;LMS.3 (Model)

the LMS was authorized 'to sell for the Society such objects from the Museum as are without any special missionary interest', although it is unclear how much was sold at this time.[49]

The museum was rearranged following these departures in late 1890, but the attention of the LMS increasingly appears to have been given to temporary exhibitions. [50] These included an exhibition of around 2000 items, including many from the museum, at the Crystal Palace in 1895 to celebrate the centenary of the LMS.[51] In 1903, the LMS headquarters moved from Blomfield Street, where they had been since 1835, to temporary accommodation at Gray's Inn Road. New headquarters opened at New Bridge Street in February 1905, and plans seem to have been made to reestablish the museum, with a new catalogue promised in May 1905. However, this does not appear to have happened, possibly because at precisely this time, the LMS embarked on a series of major temporary exhibitions at various locations across the British Isles, to which material from the LMS museum collection was loaned.

In November 1909 the museum and library sub-committee recommended that the museum be closed and its unwanted contents sold 'for the benefit of the Society, preserving, however, all articles of historic Missionary interest, and such

[49] SOAS: CWM/LMS/Home/Literature Committee Minutes/Box 1 1866-1915, p.143 June 13th, 1890.
[50] SOAS: CWM/LMS/Home/Literature Committee Minutes/Box 1 1866-1915, p.146 January 8th, 1891.
[51] 'Children's Centenary Demonstration at the Crystal Palace', *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* (September 1895), pp.236-7.

as would be useful for the loan department'.[52] A report in February 1910, justified this on the basis of:

> (a) The difficulty of keeping the objects in the Museum clean and in proper order
>
> (b) The rarity of any visitors
>
> (c) The fact that there are now so many Exhibitions throughout the country of greater variety and worth.[53]

Further justifications given by the Home Board in March 1910 also linked the closure of the museum to the multiplication of museums in all parts of the country, and the arrangement reached with the British Museum in 1890.[54]

In the fifty years between the publication of the last surviving catalogue and the closure of the LMS museum, the contents of the museum were moved three times and the collection was rearranged following the loan of material to the British Museum. In addition, various raids were made on the collection to furnish objects for a range of exhibitions arranged by the LMS and its supporters from at least 1867 onwards. If the LMS collection can be treated as a site of deposition for material arising from missionary encounters in southern Africa during the early nineteenth century, by 1910 it was very far from an undisturbed deposit. While there are no surviving records describing the rearrangements that occurred in the half century after 1860, there are a number of records relating to

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[52] SOAS: CWM/LMS/Home/Literature Committee Minutes/Box 1 1866-1915. p.111-112, 29 November 1909. 'Museum & Library Sub-Committee'
[53] SOAS: CWM/LMS/Home/Literature Committee Minutes/Box 1 1866-1915. p.113, 14 February 1910. 'Report of Museum & Library Sub-Committee'
[54] SOAS: CWM/LMS/Home/Literature Committee Minutes/Box 1 1866-1915. p.111-112, 29 November 1909. 'Museum & Library Sub-Committee'

the process by which material was dispersed from the museum following its closure in 1910.

Dispersal and Rediscovery

In April 1910, Charles Hercules Read was given the opportunity to select items for the British Museum before they were offered to others.[55] It then seems that items from the museum were made available for purchase by Directors of the Society during the annual missionary meeting in the first week of May.[56] On 13 May, further selections were made by Henry Balfour, from the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, and the private collector A.W.F. Fuller, who visited at the same time and took turns to select items from the collection. Additional material was selected by the dealer W.O. Oldman on 18 May, and at some point by Dr Harrison from the Horniman Museum. The remainder was then sold at an auction at Stevens on 31 May.

British Museum accession registers record 262 items, although the current database lists 283 objects since others were subsequently found unlabeled. Of these, 103 came from mainland Africa but at least 23 of these items do not come from southern Africa, and appear to have been collected following the establishment of an LMS mission at Lake Tanganyika in 1877. The accession register at the Pitt Rivers Museum records 97 objects that were 'Purchased from the Society when their museum was broken up and dispersed'. The museum

[55] British Museum (hereafter BM): Department of Prehistory and Europe archive correspondence 1910, T-Z box

[56] SOAS: CWM/LMS/Home/Literature Committee Minutes/Box 1 1866-1915. p.113, 14 February 1910. 'Report of Museum & Library Sub-Committee'; BM: Department of Prehistory and Europe archive correspondence: 1910, H-J box. Jones to Joyce, 9 May 1910.

later received twenty further objects as part of the estate of Henry Balfour, who seems to have personally bought these from the LMS in 1910.[57] Horniman Museum records suggest 20 objects were received from the LMS in 1910.[58] The surviving purchase records of the dealer W.O. Oldman show that he bought 70 items from the LMS directly, and an additional 118 objects from the sale at Stevens.[59] In addition it has been possible to identify 163 objects acquired by Fuller from the LMS, mostly now held at the Field Museum in Chicago, although not all of these were purchased in 1910 since he acquired further material from the LMS on at least four more occasions before 1936.

It is not possible to know what was removed from the museum for the loan collection or what was sold to the directors of the LMS during Missionary Week in 1910, or at earlier points in the museum's history. However, across the purchases in 1910, for which records exist, it is possible to identify 212 African items. This potentially represents approximately 80% of the 261 artefactual items described in the catalogue fifty years previously, although the African collection had grown in the intervening period, not least through additional material collected at Lake Tanganyika. Nevertheless by comparing these items, earlier descriptions, and surviving labels it is possible to identify several objects that are almost certainly those described in the surviving 19th century catalogues. It has been possible to identify 45 items in museum collections with labels still attached that relate to descriptions in the 1860 catalogue, and of these

[57] Pitt Rivers Museum: Accession Register: 1910.77.1 & 2, 1938.34.38, 58, 59, 60, 545, 550, 573, 626, 627, 640, 1938.35.16, 1557-63
[58] HM: Accession Register: 10.62 – 10.81. This includes material from Asia (7), Oceania (6), Africa (5), and Europe (2).
[59] BM: Centre for Anthropology - Oldman Collection Purchase Books 1910

18 are items from southern Africa. The relevant descriptions are as follows:

British Museum:

11, 12. Two female garments, worn behind, of skin, ornamented with beads.[60]

30. Arm ornament of leather. Presented by Rev. R. Moffat.[61]

42. Buttons of stone (serpentine) and glass beads.[62]

49. A Mantatee female apron, of iron beads. Presented by the Rev. R. Moffat.[63]

57. Belt, probably for the head, composed of thin slips of reed.[64]

74. A bone box for carrying grease.[65]

78, 79. Snuff boxes or bottles, of carved ivory. Presented by the Rev. R. Moffat.[66]

83. A snuff box, made of the stomach of an ox, by the Amaponda tribe.[67]

97. *Litola*, or sticks, for producing fire by friction. Bechuana[68]

100, 104. *Limao*, or needles and cases used by the Bechuanas, Barolongs, and Mantatees[69]

109. Coranna shaving brush, made of wood, by beating it when green.[70]

141. A calabash used by the Kaffirs.[71]

Field Museum, Chicago:

77. A child's rattle, of leather, inclosing stones.[72]

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[60] BM: Af1910;-.375 & Af1910;-.374
[61] BM: Af1910;-.397
[62] BM: Af1910;-.395
[63] BM: Af1910;-.402
[64] BM: Af1910;-.391
[65] BM: Af1910;-.386
[66] BM: Af1910;-.384;b & Af1910;-.384;a
[67] BM: Af1910;-.388
[68] BM: Af1910;-.417
[69] BM: Af1910;-.381 & Af1910;-.382
[70] BM: Af1910;-.387
[71] BM: Af1910;-.526

80. Snuff-boxes of horn.[73]

84. Snuff box of leather. Lattakoo.[74]

In addition the British Museum has an item with a red label, linking it with the following description in the Africa section of the later LMS catalogue:

136. Another larger leather vessel, being the skin of the hind portion of an animal, with the feet on.[75]

This has subsequently been identified as a seal skin float from the Arctic, suggesting that one should not assume that nineteenth century LMS catalogue attributions were necessarily accurate. Nevertheless, it seems highly likely that many of the items identified in this way also relate to similar descriptions in the 1826 catalogue. Some, such as the fire sticks can be directly related to incidents described in Campbell's accounts.[76]

Even without surviving labels relating to particular catalogues, however, it is possible to identify other items on the basis of their nineteenth century catalogue descriptions. In the British Museum there is carved wooden milk pail or bottle, presumably that described as 'used by the Amazoola tribe' and

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[72] Field Museum Catalog No: 210492
[73] Field Museum Catalog No: 210881
[74] Field Museum Catalog No: 210882
[75] BM: Am1910;-.448
[76] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume one, p.76.

presented by Moffat.[77] In addition there is a string of prognosticating dice from the Basotho,[78] and a number of wooden spoons, also described as presented by Moffat.[79] A head-dress made from porcupine bristles is unmistakeable,[80] as is the 'Hottentot' headdress, adorned with cowry shells.[81] In addition the British Museum retains an engraved ostrich eggshell,[82] and several ostrich eggshell bead body decorations that appear to be described in the earlier catalogues.[83] There are also a number of 'conical hats of basket work, from the interior of Africa,[84] and a hat in European shape, made of giraffe hair, presented to the LMS by Moffat,[85] as well as four items identified as 'Likhau – worn across the breast by Mantatee warriors',[86] and an earthenware vessel collected by Campbell at Kaditshwene.[87] The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford retains a pair of slabs of polished horn, used as mirrors,[88] and a 'Hottentot violin and bow' resembling a European violin.[89] The Field Museum in Chicago holds copper beads and arm ornaments that were thought by Fuller to be those listed in the catalogue as presented by Campbell and Moffat.[90]

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[77] BM: Af1910;-.361
[78] BM: Af1910;-.389
[79] BM: Af1910;-.427, BM: Af1910;-.428, & BM: Af1910;-.429
[80] BM: Af1910;-.398
[81] BM: Af1910;-.400
[82] BM: Af1910;-.363
[83] BM: Af1910;-.364, Af1910;-.364a, Af1910;-.364b, Af1910;-.364c, Af1910;-.365a-b, Af1910;-.390, Af1910;-.444
[84] BM: Af1910;-.371 - 274
[85] BM: Af1963,15.1
[86] BM: Af1910;-.409-411
[87] BM: Af1910;-.423. Thanks to Jan Boeyens for raising this possibility. We hope that this will be explored in a future publication.
[88] PRM: 1910.62.95
[89] PRM: 1938.34.640.1 - 2
[90] Field Museum Catalog Nos: 210861 - 210877

Assessing Contemporary Significance

Providing these items with provenances that connect them to early nineteenth century missionary encounters makes them some of the earliest documented southern African items held by British and American museums, and certainly older than most museum collections in South Africa itself. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think that this means that these objects document 'traditional' modes of African cultural practice that predate European influence. In many cases they emerged from exchanges with people living in what Martin Legassick has termed the 'frontier zone', beyond the formal boundaries of the Cape Colony.[91] Marie Louise Pratt has discussed the 'contact zone' as 'the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict'.[92] This is certainly a fair characterization of conditions in the Northern Cape during the early nineteenth century, but what it fails to capture is that contact zones can also be extremely experimental and creative places. The northern Cape was occupied by various groups of people, not least the Griqua, or 'Bastards' as they were initially known, who used European technologies such as guns and horses to establish new ways of living in southern Africa's arid interior. The frontier zone, in which LMS missions operated, was also one in which people adapted existing materials and technologies in the light of new encounters and discoveries.

One example of this might be the extraordinary diversity in the forms taken by

[91] M.C. Legassick, *The Politics of a South Africa Frontier: The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the Missionaries, 1780-1840* (Basel, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2010 [1969]).
[92] M.L. Pratt, *Imperial eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (New York, Routledge, 2008).

what are described in the LMS museum catalogues as 'snuff boxes' or 'pouches'. The travel accounts of John Campbell make it clear that the exchange of tobacco and the sharing of snuff was virtually a pre-requisite in every social contact, at least with him as a European. It is therefore striking that these encounters sometimes resulted in the exchange of containers, as well as their contents. From carved ivory bottles to leather pouches, acacia seeds and even the stomach of an ox, it seems that people were experimenting with keeping the snuff they received from exchanges in many different kinds of container.

Another area of evident experimentation relates to headgear. The LMS museum contained 'various conical hats of basket work from the interior of Africa' as well as a hat in the European shape, made of giraffe hair and presented by Robert Moffat. On 2 April 1820, John Campbell describes encountering 'Linx Malalla, from Old Lattakoo', wearing 'a straw hat of a conical shape, a fashion which I had not seen in Africa before'.[93] It is tempting to suggest that this 'fashion' was a response to encounters with 'Cape Malay' slaves or former slaves, many of whom wore conical *toedang* hats, just as the hat made in European form out of giraffe hair must have been a response to the hats worn by Europeans.[94] While the British Museum have recently amended the catalogue records for their conical hats from the LMS museum to suggest the may be food covers from Tanzania, it seems more likely that they represent a particular 'fashion' which did not necessarily become embedded in stereotypical modes of tribal dress known from

[93] J. Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, undertaken at the request of the London missionary society: being a narrative of a second journey in the interior of that country* (London, Francis Westley, 1822), volume one, p.94.
[94] J. Giblin & C. Spring. *South Africa: the art of a nation* (London, Thames & Hudson, 2016), p.82.

the later nineteenth and twentieth century, at least in the northern Cape. However, it is difficult not to speculate on the origins of the Basotho hat, or *mokorotlo,* and the degree to which an item of fashionable contemporary dress may have became co-opted into the Basotho nation-building project.

As a final example, I will consider the engraved ostrich eggshell which seems to be the one described in the 1826 catalogue of the LMS museum as 'rudely carved and coloured by a Hottentot'. It is the only item from the LMS museum currently on display at the British Museum and was featured on the front cover of a book, *Africa, arts and cultures*.[95] It is described by its display label as a water container made by San people in Botswana in the 19th and 20th century. I have argued elsewhere that this description denies the eggshell the two centuries of history in which it has existed as a museum object in Europe, but the label's attributions, presumably arrived at on the basis of stylistic comparison, are also likely to be misplaced on a number of grounds.[96]

Unlike snuff boxes and hats, ostrich eggshell survives well underground, which makes it possible to compare eggshells from museum deposits with those from excavated contexts. In 2002, Zoë Henderson reported the discovery of a cache of 'ostrich-eggshell flasks' at Thomas' farm, south of Kimberley, dated to the nineteenth century. The cache included two eggs with mastic spouts of a kind that had been observed in the area in 1839 by James Backhouse on his way to

[95] J. Mack, *Africa, Arts and Cultures* (London, British Museum Press, 2000).
[96] C. Wingfield, 'Reassembling the London Missionary Society Collection: experiments with symmetrical anthropology and the archaeological sensibility', in S. Byrne, A. Clarke and R. Harrison (eds), Reassembling the Collection (Santa Fe, SAR Seminar Series, 2012), pp. 61-87.

the LMS mission at Griquatown.[97] This prompted David Morris to identify another example, suggesting that 'the idea and method of creating a spout on eggshell flasks was a relatively localized development in space and time'.[98] Two further examples showing discolouration around the mouth, suggestive of a mastic spout, were identified from the adjacent region, leading Morris to suggest that the idea of adding spouts may have been inspired by knowledge of glass bottles, reflecting contact and interaction in a particular region of the Northern Cape frontier, probably in the first half of the nineteenth century'. [99] A sixth example was subsequently reported from an adjacent site (see Figure 7).[100]

Given that the ostrich eggshell in the British Museum also has a mastic spout, it is very likely to have been collected in the environs of the LMS mission at Griquatown. It is unlike the other examples in that it is engraved, but it nevertheless becomes the seventh known example of a spouted eggshell. That it was already in London by 1826 suggests that it is likely to have been acquired by John Campbell on one of his two journeys - he describes encountering Bushmen filling five ostrich egghells with water on 25 March 1820, on his way north from 'Griqua Town to Dithakong'.[101]

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[97] Z. Henderson, 'A Dated Cache of Ostrich-Eggshell Flasks from Thomas' Farm, Northern Cape Province, South Africa', *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 57, 175 (2002), pp. 38-40; J. Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*. (London, Hamilton Adams, 1844), p.445.

[98] D. Morris, 'Another Spouted Ostrich Eggshell Container from the Northern Cape', *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 57, (2002), pp. 41.

[99] D. Morris, 'Further Evidence of Spouts on Ostrich Eggshell Containers from the Northern Cape, with a Note on the History of Anthropology and Archaeology at the McGregor Museum, Kimberley', *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 60, 182 (2005), pp. 112-114.

[100] A.J.B. Humphreys, 'More on Spouted Ostrich Eggshell Containers from the Northern Cape', *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 61, 184 (2006), pp. 208.

[101] It is potentially troubling that the 1826 museum catalogue records the eggshell as having been 'coloured by a Hottentot', but since the catalogue does not use the term

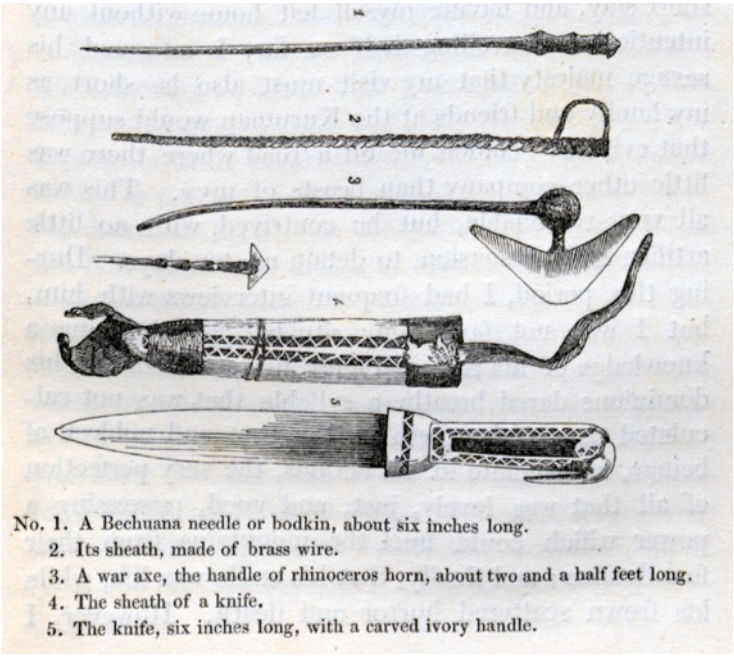
What this example perhaps best demonstrates is the fruitfulness of considering museum collections as sites of deposition for material exchanged with Europeans in the context of missionary encounters. Just as archaeological investigations at mission sites have the potential to complement what is known on the basis of documentary records, museum collections provide an additional and alternative source of evidence. While there are certainly biases of preservation in relation to what was deemed worthy of collection and preservation, which shifted with collecting paradigms over time, these biases are no more or less difficult to account for than biases of preservation encountered at documentary archives or archaeological sites. Each site of deposition forms an assemblage that is inevitably incomplete, but which nevertheless has the potential to yield a form of evidence, that may become usefully complementary when one source of evidence is interrogated in the light of another.

Museum collections may complement understandings of material engagements that have emerged through excavation, by providing examples of artefacts that would not survive in underground deposits. Equally understanding of excavated artefacts and sites has the potential to inform interpretations of museum objects which have become detached from documentary records recording where and when they were acquired. This is certainly more likely to be the case where items are made of materials that would survive in excavated contexts, such as ostrich eggshell, ceramics or metal. Nevertheless, the preservation of organic

'Bushman' at all, even though it is used in Campbell's account, it may be that Hottentot was simply used as a generic term in the catalogue for people of Khoisan descent.

materials in early museum collections creates the potential to extend understandings of the material dimensions of missionary encounters beyond what can be established through excavation, or indeed through interrogation of the documentary archive alone.

Figures



No. 1. A Bechuana needle or bodkin, about six inches long.
2. Its sheath, made of brass wire.
3. A war axe, the handle of rhinoceros horn, about two and a half feet long.
4. The sheath of a knife.
5. The knife, six inches long, with a carved ivory handle.

Figure 1: 'Bechuana' artefacts, pictured on p.535 in Moffat's (1842) *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (Copyright: Cadbury Research Library: Special Collections, University of Birmingham)

Figure 2: Double-page plate, printed in Campbell's (1815) *Travels in South Africa* opposite p.220 (Copyright: The Author)

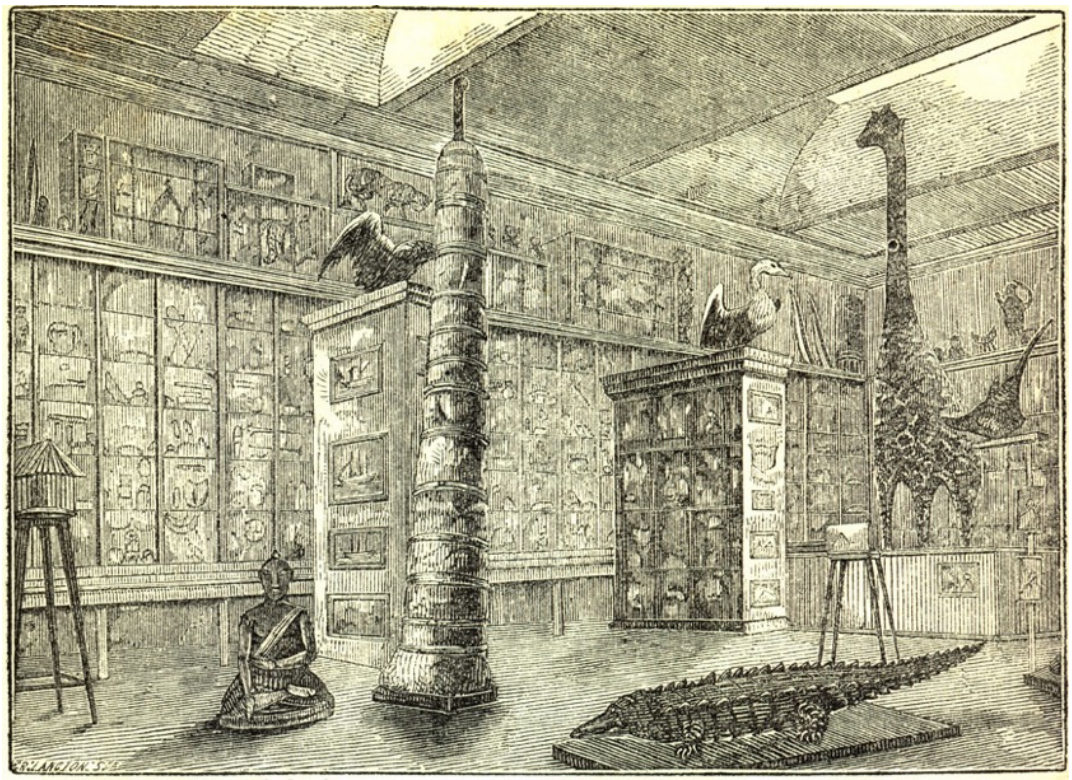


Figure 3: Image printed to accompany a series of articles about 'The Missionary Museum' from the *Juvenile Missionary Magazine*, vol. iv, no,41 (October 1847), p.219 (Copyright: The Author)

Figure 4: The Museum of the London Missionary Society, *Illustrated London News*, 15 June1859, p.605 (Copyright: The Author)

Figure 5: Engraved Ostrich Eggshell (Af1910-363) from the London Missionary Society collection at the British Museum (Copyright: The British Museum)

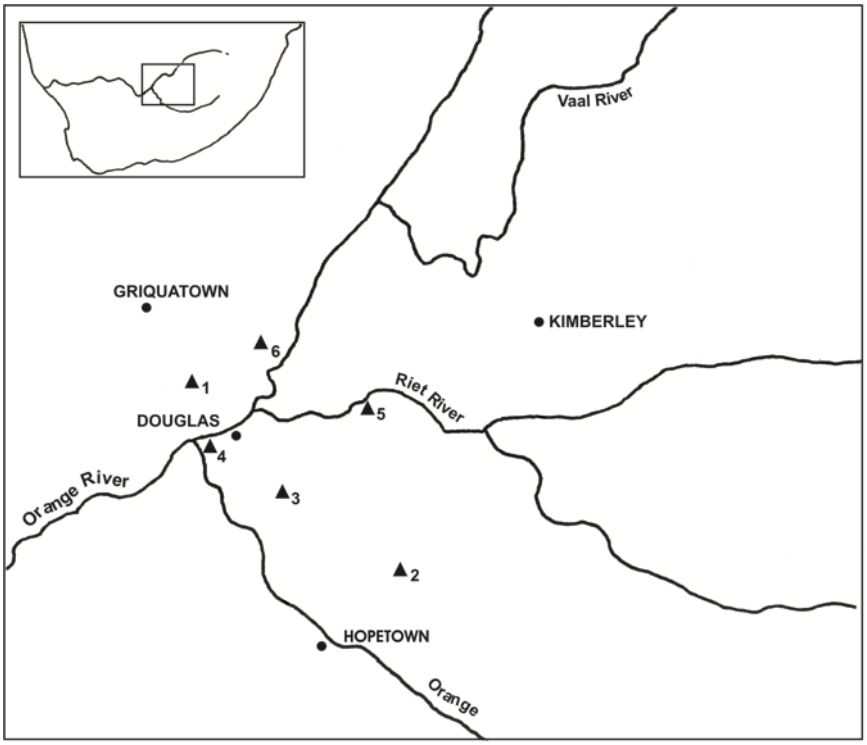


Figure 6: Distribution of places southwest of Kimberley associated with ostrich eggshells with spouts: (1) Spuigslang Fontein; (2) Thomas' Farm; (3) Saratoga; (4) Bucklands; (5) Driekopseiland; (6) Dikbosch 1 (Courtesy David Morris)